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(54) Components and catalysts for the polymerization of olefins.

(57) Catalysts for the polymerization of alpha-olefins which
comprise the reaction product of:
a) an Al-alkyl compound;
b) a silicon compound containing at least one Si-OR or
Si-OCOR or Si-NR₂ bond, R being a hydrocarbyl radical;
c) a solid comprising as essential support, a Mg dihalide in
active form and supported therein a Ti halide or a
halo-Ti-alcoholate or said halogenated Ti compound and
a silicon compound as defined in b) in a molar ratio with
the supported Ti compound from 0,1 to 5 mole of silicon
compound per mole of Ti compound.

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DESCRIPTION

The present invention refers to new supported components of catalysts for the polymerization of $\text{CH}_2=\text{CHR}$ olefins wherein R is an alkyl radical with 1 to 4 carbon atoms, or an aryl radical, and mixtures of said olefins with ethylene and the catalysts obtained from said components.

The supported highly active and highly stereospecific catalysts up to now known for the polymerization of propylene and higher olefins, are obtained by the reaction of an Al-alkyl compound partially complexed with an electron donor compound (outside donor) with a solid component comprising a Ti compound and an electron-donor compound (inside donor) supported on a Mg-halide in active form.

Examples of such catalysts have been described in British Patent No. 1,559,194 and Belgian Patent No. 868,682.

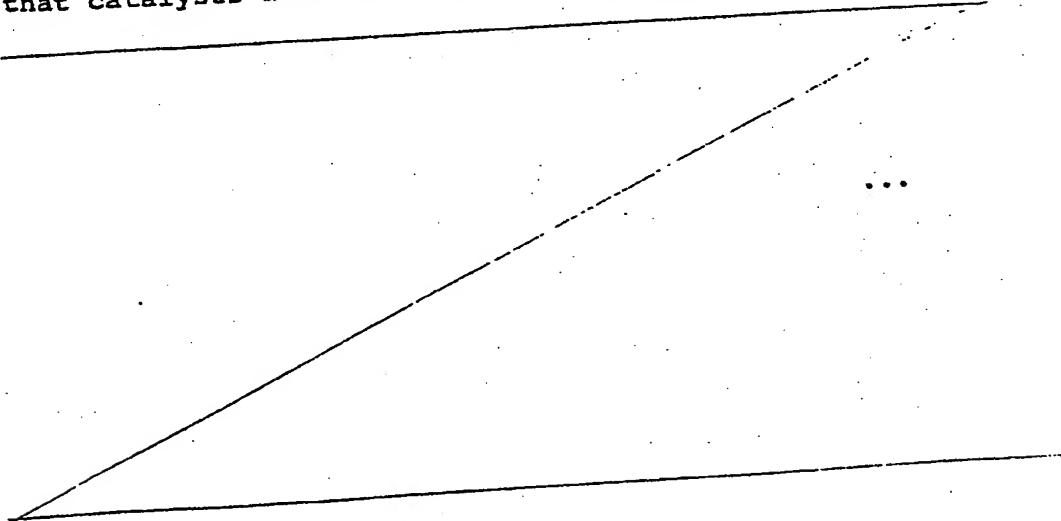
The above supported catalysts need the use of an inside donor in order to obtain polymers having a high isotactic index. If the inside donor is omitted polymers having low isotactic index are obtained.

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It has now unexpectedly been found that it is possible to obtain with high yield polymers of alpha olefins having a high isotactic index by using Ti-containing Mg dihalides-supported catalysts free from inside electron donor compounds if an outside donor is used which is a silicon compound containing Si-OR, Si-OCOR or Si-NR₂ bonds.

It has also unexpectedly been found that the activity and stereospecificity of the catalysts can be further increased if the silicon compound used as outside donor is present as inside donor also in the Ti-containing Mg dihalide-supported component in amounts corresponding to molar ratios between the silicon compound and the supported halogenated Ti-compound comprised between 0.1 and 5.

The above results are surprising if one considers that catalysts are known which are prepared by using both



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as inside and outside donor a silicon compound containing Si-O-C bonds and which do not offer a performance in terms of activity and stereospecificity better than the one obtainable with catalysts in which an ester of benzoic acid is used as inside and outside donor.

The rather poor performance of the above prior art catalysts is due to the fact that the Si-containing inside donor is substantially removed from the Ti-containing supported component as result of the method of preparation of said component.

The catalysts of this invention comprise the product of the reaction between the following components:

- a) an Al-trialkyl or Al-alkyl compound containing 2 or more aluminum atoms linked to each other through oxygen or nitrogen atoms or through SO_4 or SO_3 groups;
- b) a silicon compound containing one or more Si-OR, Si-OCOR or Si-NR₂ bonds (R being a hydrocarbyl radical);
- c) a solid comprising as essential support an anhydrous Mg dihalide in the active form as herebelow defined

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and supported on said dihalide a Ti-halide or Ti-haloalcoholate or the solid c) containing supported therein also a silicon compound as defined in b) in an amount corresponding to a molar ratio between the supported silicon compound and the supported halogenated Ti-compound comprised between 0.1 and 5.

The active anhydrous Mg dihalides forming the essential support of component c) are the Mg dihalides showing in the X-ray powder spectrum of component c) a broadening of at least 30% of the most intense diffraction line which appears in the powder spectrum of the corresponding dihalide having $1 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$ of surface area or are the Mg dihalides showing a X-ray powder spectrum in which said most intense diffraction line is replaced by a halo with the intensity peak shifted with respect to the interplanar distance of the most intense line and/or are the Mg dihalides having a surface area greater than $3 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$.

The measurement of the surface area of the Mg dihalides is made on component c) after treatment with boiling TiCl_4 for 2 hours. The found value is considered as surface area of the Mg dihalide.

Very active forms of Mg dihalides are those showing a X-ray powder spectrum in which the most intense diffraction

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line appearing in the spectrum of the corresponding halide having $1 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$ of surface area is decreased in relative intensity and broadened to form a halo or are those in which said most intense line is replaced by a halo having its intensity peak shifted with respect to the interplanar distance of the most intense line. Generally the surface area of the above forms is higher than $30-40 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$ and is comprised in particular between $100-300 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$.

Active forms are also those deriving from the above forms by heat-treatment in inert hydrocarbon solvents and showing in the X-ray spectrum sharp diffraction lines in place of the halos.

The sharp, most intense line of these forms shows a broadening of at least 30% with respect to the corresponding line of the Mg dihalide having $1 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$ of surface area. Preferred Mg dihalides are Mg dichloride and Mg dibromide. The content in water of the dihalides is generally less than 1% by weight.

For Ti halides or Ti haloalcohoholates and esters supported on the active Mg dihalide is meant the above compounds which may be chemically or physically fixed on the support, not extractable from component c) by treatment of

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the same with boiling 1,2-dichloroethane for 2 hours.

Components a), b) and c) are made to react each other in any order; preferably, however, components a) and b) are premixed before being contacted with component c).

The pre-mixing of a) and b) is conducted at temperatures comprised, usually, between room temperature and the temperature used in the polymerization process.

The pre-reaction of c) and b) may be carried out also at higher temperatures. Compound b) may be also incorporated and made to react with component c) itself. Component b) is made to react in a molar ratio with respect to the halogenated Ti compound supported on component c) of at least 1 and in a molar ratio with respect the Al-alkyl compound used as component a) of less than 20 and preferably comprised between 0.05 to 0.3.

In component c) the molar ratio between the Mg diha-

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lide and the halogenated Ti compound supported therein is comprised between 1 and 500 and the molar ratio between said halogenated Ti compound and the electron-donor supported on the Mg dihalide is comprised between 0.1 and 50. The silicon compounds set forth in b) include compounds of general formula:



wherein:

R is an alkyl, alkenyl, aryl, arylalkyl, cycloalkyl radical with from 1 to 20 carbon atoms;

Y is a -OR', -OCOR', -NR₂', wherein R', either equal to or different from R, has the same meaning as R;

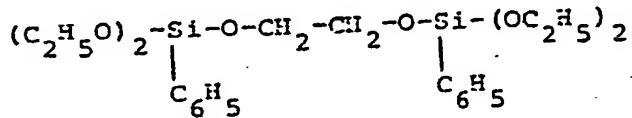
X is either a halogen or hydrogen atom or a -OCOR'', -NR₂'' group wherein R'', either equal to or different from R', has the same meaning as R';

m, n and p are numbers comprised respectively between: m between 0 and 3, n between 1 and 4 and p between 0 and 1; and m+n+p is equal to 4.

Other silicon compounds that may be used are compounds in which two or more silicon atoms are bound to each other through oxygen or nitrogen atoms.

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Examples of these compounds are hexaethoxydisiloxane, symmetrical diphenyltetraethoxydisiloxane



Preferred silicon compounds are: phenylalkoxysilanes as phenyltriethoxy or trimethoxysilane, diphenyldimethoxy and diethoxysilane, monochlorophenyldiethoxysilane; alkyl-alkoxysilanes as ethyltriethoxysilane, ethyltriisopropoxy-silane.

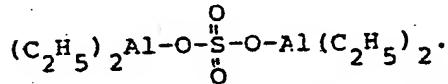
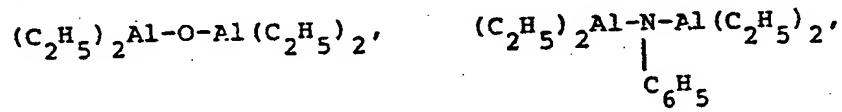
Examples of other suitable compounds are: chlorotriethoxysilane, acetoxytriethoxysilane, vinyltriethoxysilane, butyltriethoxysilane, triphenylmonoethoxysilane, phenyltricycloethoxysilane, phenyldiethoxydiethylaminosilane, tetraphenoxy silane or tetralkoxysilanes as tetramethoxy-silane.

* In the catalysts of the invention the silicon compound is present in a combined form in the solid product of the reaction between the various catalyst-forming components, in a molar ratio between the silicon compound and the halogenated Ti compound greater than 0.05 and generally comprised between 0.1 and 5.

* The silicon compound can be also formed *in situ* by reaction for instance of a halogenated silicon compound as SiCl_4 with an alcohol or an alcoholate of Mg or Al.

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The Al-alkyl compounds forming component a) includes Al-trialkyls as for instance Al-triethyl, Al-triisobutyl, Al-triisopropyl and compounds containing two or more Al atoms linked to each other through etero-atoms as:



As indicated Al-alkyl compounds in which Al atoms are linked through groups as SO_4 or SO_3 are also suitable.

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The Al-alkyl compounds may be used in mixture with Al-alkyl halides as AlEt_2Cl .

Component c) is prepared according to various methods, one of which, which is also one of the preferred, consists in co-milling the Mg dihalide, the Ti-halide or Ti-haloalcoholate and the silicon compound when it is used, until appearance in X-ray spectrum of the milled product of the modifications above set forth for the spectrum of the Mg dihalide and in heat treating the milled product in suspension in a halogenated hydrocarbon as 1,2 dichloroethane, separation of the solid product and washing with heptane or a similar hydrocarbon solvent. The duration of the treatment is generally comprised between 1-4 hours and it depends on the temperature of treatment.

According to another method and adduct between an Mg dihalide and an alcohol is reacted with TiCl_3 . The reactions are described in Belgian patent 868,682 and published German patent 3,022,728.

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In all the above methods the final product contains a Mg dihalide, present in the active form as set forth here above.

Other known methods which lead to the formation of Mg dihalide in active form or to Ti- containing Mg dihalide supported components, in which the dihalide is present in active form, are based on the following reactions:

- reaction of a Grignard reagent or a Mg R₂ compound (R being a hydrocarbyl radical) or complexes of said Mg R₂ compounds with Al-trialkyls, with halogenating agents as AlX₃ or Al R_mX_n compounds (X is halogen, R is a hydrocarbyl m+n = 3), SiCl₄ or HSiCl₃;
- reaction of a Grignard reagent with a silanol or polysiloxane, H₂O or with an alcohol and further reaction with a halogenating agent or with TiCl₄;

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reaction of Mg with an alcohol and a halogenidric acid or of Mg with a hydrocarbyl halide and an alcohol;

reaction of MgO with Cl_2 or $AlCl_3$;

reaction of $MgX_2 \cdot nH_2O$ (X = halogen) with a halogenating agent or $TiCl_4$;

reaction of Mg mono or dialcoholates or Mg carboxylates with a halogenating agent.

The Ti-halides or Ti-halogenalcoholates, include in particular the Ti-tetrahalides, Ti-trihalides and Ti-trihalogenalcoholates. Preferred compounds are: $TiCl_4$, $TiBr_4$, 2,6-dimethylphenoxytrichlorotitanium.

The Ti-trihalides are obtained according to known methods, for instance by reduction of $TiCl_4$ with Al or a metallorganic Al compound or with hydrogen.

In case of the Ti-trihalides it may be convenient for the purpose of improving the performance of the catalysts to carry out an oxidization, even if partial, of the titanium, either during or after the preparation of component c).

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To this purpose there may be used halogens, iodine halides.

Preferred catalysts are those in which: component c) is obtained from $MgCl_2$, $TiCl_4$ a silicon compound selected from the groups of phenyl or ethyltrietoxysilane or diphenyldimethoxy or diethoxysilane.

Component a) is an Al-trialkyl as Al-triethyl or Al-triisobutyl.

One of the preferred method of preparing component c) consists in co-milling $MgCl_2$, $TiCl_4$ and the silicon compound and in treating the milled product with a halogenated hydrocarbon as 1,2-dichloroethane.

The catalysts according to the invention are used to polymerize the alpha-olefins according to known methods that is, in carrying out the polymerization in a liquid phase, either in the presence or absence of an inert hydrocarbon solvent, or in gas phase or also by combining, for instance, a liquid phase polymerization step with a step in gas phase.

In general the temperature is comprised between 40° and $160^\circ C$, but preferably between 60° and $90^\circ C$, operating ei-

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ther at atmospheric or at greater than atmospheric pressure.

As a molecular weight regulator hydrogen or other regulators of a known type are used.

The catalysts are used particularly suitable in polymerizing propylene, butene-1, styrene, 4-methylpentene. The catalysts may also be used according known methods to polymerize mixtures of propylene and ethylene to form modified polypropylenes having better shock-resistance at low temperatures (the so called block copolymers of propylene and ethylene) or to obtain random crystalline copolymers of propylene with minor proportions of ethylene.

The following examples are given for merely illustrative purpose and are not intended to be in any way limiting the scope of the invention.

EXAMPLE 1

Into an inox steel autoclave of 2000 ml holding capacity, equipped with a magnetical stirrer and a thermometer, heat stabilized at 60°C and kept under pressure by a nitrogen

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atmosphere, there were introduced 5 m mols of triethyl-aluminum, 1.5 m mols of phenyltrietoxysilane, the solid catalytic component obtained reacting $TiCl_4$ with $MgCl_2 \cdot 2 \cdot 3 C_2H_5OH$, operating under the same conditions described in Example 1 of Belgian Pat. No. 868,682 and 700 ml of degassed and anhydrous n-heptane, while propylene was also fed in. The catalytic component thus prepared show a X-ray powder spectrum in which the most intense diffraction line appearing in the spectrum of $MgCl_2$ having $1 m^2/g$ of surface area was decreased in relative intensity and broadened to form a halo.

Thereupon there was fed in 0.2 atm of hydrogen and then the whole was rapidly heated up to $70^\circ C$, while contemporaneously further propylene was fed into reach a total pressure of 7 atm.

This latter pressure was maintained constant over the whole polymerization by feeding in the monomer. After 4 hours the polymerization was interrupted, the polymer was isolated by filtering and then was dried. The quantity of polymer dissolved in the filtrate was thereupon isolated, weighed and summed to the polymer soluble in boiling n-heptane, for the calculation of the isotacticity index.

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The quantity of catalytic component used and the content of Ti in said component, the yield in polymer with respect to the introduced Ti, the isotacticity index (I.I.) and the inherent viscosity determined in tetralin at 35°C, have all been reported in Table I.

EXAMPLE 2

Example 1 was repeated but using a solid catalytic component prepared as follows.

Anhydrous $MgCl_2$, phenyltriethoxysilane in molar ratio Mg/Si of 6, and $TiCl_4$ in molar ratio of 1:1 with respect to the phenyltriethoxysilane were co-milled in a vibrating mill of the type VIBRATOM manufactured by N.V. TEMA'S, Gravenhage (Holland), having a total volume of one liter and containing 3 kg of stainless steel balls of 16 mm diameter.

Grinding was effected employing a filling coefficient equal to 100 g/l of total volume (vacuum), at an interior temperature of the mill of 25°C, and with grinding time of 72 hours.

Charging of the mill with the materials to be ground, the

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10 g of the co-ground product were contacted with 100 ml of 1,2 dichloroethane at 80°C for 2 hours.

The solid was then separated by filtering and then was washed with a heptane at said temperature until the disappearance of the chlorine ions from the filtrate. The x-ray powder spectrum was similar to that of catalytic component of Example 1.

The solid catalytic component obtained was used in the polymerization of propylene under the same polymerization conditions described in Example 1.

The results of the polymerization have been reported in Table I.

EXAMPLE 4

40 g of $MgCl_2$ was milled in the mill described in Example 2 for 200 hours at room temperature.

10 g of the ground product were treated with 150 ml of $TiCl_4$ for 2 hours at 135°C. After hot filtering, the treatment with $TiCl_4$ was repeated. After washing with heptane at 80°C and drying, the dry solid was used under the same polymerization conditions described in Example 1.

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The solid catalytic component showed a X-ray powder spectrum similar to that of the catalytic component of Example 1. The results of the polymerization have been reported in Table I.

Comparative EXAMPLE 1

200 mg of the solid catalytic component prepared according to Example 4 were used in the polymerization of propylene under the same conditions described in Example 1 but using ethyl p-toluate instead of PES. The result of the polymerization have been reported in Table I.

Comparative EXAMPLE 2

Comparative Example 1 was repeated but using the solid catalytic component prepared according to Example 3. The results of the polymerization test have been recorded in Table I.

TABLE I

Example No.	Solid catalytic component		Polymerization		
	Ti content of solid component % by weight	Catalyst mg	$\text{Al}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_5)_3$ donor (mols)	Yield g polymer/g catalyst component	I.I. %
1	2.5	46	3.33	7,000	80
2	3	40	10	6,300	95
3	1.3	55	5	2,700	86.6
4	0.5	200	3	1,000	83
comp. 1	0.5	200	3.33	490	78
comp. 2	1.3	73	3.33	650	77

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- 1) A solid component to be used in combination with an Al-Al-alkyl compound to form catalysts for the polymerization of alpha-olefins comprising an anhydrous Mg dihalide in active form as essential support and supported on said Mg dihalide a Ti halide or a Ti haloalcoholate and a silicon compound containing one or more Si-Or, Si-OCOR or Si-NR₂ bonds (R being a hydrocarbyl radical) in an amount corresponding to a molar ratio with the supported halogenated Ti compound of 0.1 to 5 mols per mol of the Ti-compound.
- 2) A solid component as defined in claim 1) in which the Mg dihalide is Mg dichloride and Mg dibromide, the Ti halide is a Ti-tetrahalide and the silicon compound is a phenyl di- or trialkoxysilane or an alkyl di- or trialkoxysilane.
- 3) Catalysts for the polymerization of alpha olefins comprising the product of reaction of the following components:
 - a) an Al-trialkyl or an Al-alkyl compound containing 2 or more Al atms linked to each other through an oxygen or nitrogen atom or through SO₄ or SO₃ groups;

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- b) a solid component as defined in claim 1) or a solid component comprising an anhydrous Mf dihalide in active form as essential support and supported on said dihalide a Ti-halide or a Ti-haloalcoholate.
- 4) Catalysts as defined in claim 3) in which component b) is the solid as defined in claims 1) and 2).
- 5) Process for the polymerization of alpha olefins $\text{CH}_2=\text{CHR}$ in which R is an alkyl radical with 1 to 4 carbon atoms or an aryl radical and mixtures of said olefins with ethylene, characterized in that the polymerization process is carried out in liquid phase in presence or not of an inert hydrocarbon solvent or in gas phase, in presence of a catalyst as defined in claims 3) and 4).
- 6) Polymers of alpha olefins obtained with the process of claim 5).

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